

***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments, see pages 4-5, filed May 12, 2008, with respect to claims 1-5 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection of claims 1-5 has been withdrawn.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 1-6 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: While both dextran-maleic acid monoesters and isopropylacrylamide hydrogels are known in the art (Kim et al. WO 00/12619 and Uladag et al. US 2002/0015734 respectively), there is nothing in the art to suggest combining the two hydrogels in the claimed proportion. The closest prior art (Hokkoku et al. US 4,032,488) does not recognize the need for a defined LCST, therefore there would not be a motivation to modify the reference to achieve such a property.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

***Correspondence***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Liam J. Heincer whose telephone number is 571-270-3297. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday 7:30 to 5:00 EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mark Eashoo can be reached on 571-272-1197. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/MARK EASHOO/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1796  
30-May-08

LJH  
May 22, 2008